

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3141

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BERLIN 6583

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, GE, GW, US

SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT WITH SED GENERAL SECRETARY HONECKER

SUMMARY: DURING MY FAREWELL CALL AUGUST 27 ON GENERAL SECRETARY HONECKER, HE GAVE A GENERAL VIEW OF GDR/USSR AND GDR/FRG RELATIONS, BUT CONCENTRATED ON US/GDR TOPICS, EXPRESSING AN EMPHASIS ON INCREASED TRADE, AND SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES. I FOCUSED MY REMARKS ON THE USG'S INTEREST ON A CONSULAR CONVENTION AND THE RESOLUTION OF HUMANITARIAN CASES. END SUMMARY

1. TODAY (AUGUST 27) AT 10 AMM. I MET WITH GENERAL SECRETARY HONECKER. HE HAD INQUIRED THROUGH HIS PROTOCOL OFFICER AND DR. GEYER SEVERAL WEEKS AGO THE APPROXIMATE DATE OF MY DEPARTURE FOR THE US AND THROUGH THEM INFORMED ME THAT HE WANTED TO MEET WITH ME BEFORE MY DEPARTURE. ON AUGUST 19 DR. GEYER INFORMED THE DCM THAT BECUASE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S SCHEDULE, HE COULD SEE ME ONLY ON AUGUST 27. I WAS MET BY THE PROTOCOL OFFICER WHO ACTED AS INTERPRETER. NO ONE ELSE WAS PRESENT.

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2. HE WELCOMED ME WITH COURTESY AND EXPRESSED HIS REGRET THAT MY WIFE, WHO IS AWAY, COULD NOT BE PRESENT, AS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY INFORMED ME THAT HIS WIFE WOULD BE PRESENT TO GREET HER. THE MEETING LASTED 55 MINUTES AND PROCEEDED IN THE SAME FASHION AS MY TWO PREVIOUS MEETINGS, WITH HOENCKER OPENING WITH A 20 MINUTE DISCUSSION, INCLUDING INTERPRETATION.

3. HONECKER RECALLED THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED WITH ME IN FORMER MEETINGS GENERAL PROGRESS IN THE GDR, BUT SINCE IT IS WELL KNOWN FROM STATEMENTS IN THE MEDIAN, THERE WAS NO NECESSITY TO DETAIL AGAIN THE EXTENT OF PROGRESS IN THE GDR. HOWEVER, HE DID WANT TO SAY THAT THE GDR HAD ACHIEVED ITS PAST OBJECTIVES AND WOULD ACHIEVE ITS 1975-1980 GOALS AS ANNOUNCED IN ITS PARTY PROGRAM. HE SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT FULL HOUSING FOR EVERY FAMILY WOULD BE ACHIEVED BY 1990 AND PERHAPS BY 1985. HE FURTHER NOTED THE SED PARTY CONGRESS, THE ECPC AND HIS RECENT MEETING WITH BREZHNEV, SAYING "I AM SURE YOUR EMBASSY HAS READ ALL ABOUT THEM AND IT WILL NOT BE NECESSARY FOR ME TO GO FURTHER."

4. NEVERTHELESS HE SPOKE OF HIS VISIT WITH SECRETARY GENERAL BREZHNEV IN THE CRIMEA, SAYING THAT IT WAS EXTREMELY HARMONIOUS. THEY HAD AGREED UPON THE POLICY OF BOTH THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GDR RESPECTING DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES. HE EMPHASIZED, AS HE HAD BEFORE, THE CLOSE TIES BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GDR, AND THEIR STRENGTHENING BY THIS MEETING. HE WANTED ME TO KNOW AND TO CONVEY TO MY GOVERNMENT THAT WHILE THE TIES OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES ARE SUPREME, THAT BOTH HAD AGREED THAT THE POLICY OF DETENTE AND IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONSWITH NON-SOCIALIST COUNTRIES MUST CONTINUE. THEY HAD AGREED SPECIFICALLY THAT ALL EFFORTS WOULD BE MADE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE US AND TO ENCOURAGE DETENTE. HE FURTHER NOTED THAT IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD INCREASE ITS ECONOMIC AID TO THE GDR DURINGTHE GDR'S FIVE-YEAR PLAN.

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5. HE THEN SPOKE OF HIS VISIT IN POLAND, SAYING THAT HE AND HIS FAMILY HAD ENJOYED A FOUR-WEEK VACATION TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEVERAL YEARS. HE ADDED THAT HE HAD TALKED WITH POLISH OFFICIALS AND THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT ON GDR/POLISH RELATIONS AND POLICIES. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD FOUND A VERY STRONG FRIENDSHIP FOR THE US IN POLAND AND AN INTEREST IN OUR BICENTENNIAL, SUGGESTING THERE WERE MANY PEOPLE OF POLISH

ETHNIC ORIGIN IN THE US. I INTERVENED BY SAYING THERE WERE NOT AS MANY PEOPLE OF POLISH BACKGROUND AS OF GERMAN ORIGIN, RECALLING THE GREAT MOVEMENT TO THE US AFTER 1848. HONECKER SAID HE KNEW AND SMILED.

6. HE THEN MOVED INTO THE QUESTION OF US/GDR RELATIONS, SAYING THAT WHILE THERE HAD BEEN PROGRESS, IT APPEARED TO THE GDR THAT THE CHIEF DIFFICULTY AROSE FROM OUR ALLIANCE WITH THE FRG AND THE GDR'S STRONG ALLIANCE WITH THE SOVIET UNION. I REPLIED THAT OUR ALLIANCES HAD BEEN DISCUSSED IN OUR FIRST MEETING AND THEY WERE UNDERSTOOD BY BOTH COUNTRIES. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT PROGRESS IN GDR/US RELATIONS CONTRIBUTED TO DETENTE AND WAS ALSO OF MUTUAL VALUE, AND FRANKLY, THE GDR GAVE EMPHASIS TO INCREASED TRADE AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL EXCHANGES. HE SPOKE OF SOME PROGRESS IN CULTURAL EXCHANGES AND EXPRESSED THE DESIRE THAT THERE SHOULD BE A MUTUAL INCREASE IN SUCH EXCHANGES BY BOTH COUNTRIES. AT THIS POINT HE HANDED ME A "NON-PAPER" ON PLAIN WHITE BOND WHICH HE SAID REFLECTED HIS VIEWS AND THOSE OF "THE GOVERNMENT". HE DID NOT REFER AGAIN TO OR ELABORATE ON THE PAPER, THE TEXT OF WHICH IS BEING SENT SEPARATELY.

7. AS HE EMPHASIZED GDR INTEREST IN EXPANDING INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL TRADE, I INFORMED HIM, AS HE KNEW, THAT US/GDR FISHERIES NEGOTIATIONS WERE EXPECTED THIS YEAR. AS HE HAD ALSO MENTIONED DR. BEIL'S PROPOSALS TO ME REGARDING A GRAIN AGREEMENT, I TOLD HIM THAT WHILE I COULD NOT CONFIRM ANY OFFICIAL US/GDR AGREEMENT, I COULD INFORM HIM THAT THE SUBJECT WAS UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION AND THAT "AN UNDERSTANDING" MAY BE REACHED ON THIS SUBJECT.

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8. FINALLY, HE OPENED THE QUESTION OF FRG/GDR RELATIONS, SAYING THAT THE GDR WANTED TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE FRG. HE REFERRED TO THE BORDER INCIDENTS WITHOUT ACCUSATION AGAINST THE FRG. HONECKER SAID IT WAS HIS PURPOSE TO REDUCE AND ELIMINATE SUCH INCIDENTS AND THAT HE HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT ON THE SUBJECT. HE DID NOT TELL ME, AND I DID NOT ASK HIM, WHETHER HIS COMMUNICATION WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT HAD OCCURRED AFTER THE INCIDENTS, BUT HE WAS QUITE FIRM IN HIS STATEMENT OF PURPOSE TO CALM THE SITUATION ALONG THE BORDERS. AT THIS POINT, I TOLD HIM THAT WHILE I HAD NO COMPETENCE IN FRG/GDR MATTERS, I HAD HEARD WITH APPRECIATION THE STATEMENT, AS CONFRONTATION AND VIOLENCE WERE A MATTER OF CONCERN,

HE DID NOT RESPOND FURTHER.

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EXDIS

9. I THEN TOLD HIM I WOULD LIKE TO RESPOND TO HIS VERY FRANK DISCUSSION, AND I WOULD RAISE QUESTIONS WHICH I HAD PREVIOUSLY ADDRESSED TO HIM. I TOLD HIM THAT TWO MAJOR ISSUES CONCERNED THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES, THAT THEIR RESOLUTION WOULD HAVE A GOOD EFFECT UPON OPINION IN THE US, BUT THEIR NON-RESOLUTION BY THE GDR STOOD IN THE WAY OF PROGRESS IN OUR RELATIONS. I RAISED THE FOLLOWING ISSUES:

10. CONSULAR CONVENTION

AS HE HAD SAID IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT, FRG CONSIDERATION HAD INHIBITED PROGRESS, I SAID WHILE IT MAY HAVE SOME EFFECT ON THE GDR POSITION, THE CHIEF PURPOSE OF THE US IS TO CONCLUDE A CONSULAR CONVENTION THAT WILL ASSURE PROTECTION OF, AND ASSISTANCE TO, THE PEOPLE OF BOTH COUNTRIES AND THUS HAD A HUMANITARIAN AS WELL AS PRACTICAL ASPECT. FURTHER, THE US POSITION WAS BASED ON PRECEDENT, AND NON-INCLUSION OF POLITICAL ISSUES IN CONSULAR CONVENTIONS, AS I HAD EXPLAINED

TO HIM IN A PREVIOUS MEETING. HONECKER SAID THAT HE

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RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEM BUT TOOK PAINS TO NOTE THE UK/GDR SOLUTION. NEVERTHELESS HE SAID THAT HE WOULD DIRECT HIS OWN EFFORTS TO DETERMINE IF A SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND FOR THE CONCLUSION OF A CONSULAR CONVENTION.

11. HUMANITARIAN CASES

I TOLD HONECKER IT WAS NOT THE INTENTION OF THE US TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE GDR, BUT THIS ISSUE WAS CONSIDERED BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THE US GOVERNMENT AS ONE OF GREATEST HUMANITARIAN IMPORTANCE AND SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE GDR IN THE SAME WAY. I RECALLED THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, WHICH EMPHASIZED THE UNION OF FAMILIES AND VISITS IN THE CASES OF TRAGEDY, ILLNESS AND DEATH; THE US COULD SEE NO REASON WHY THE PROVISIONS OF THE HELSINKI ACT AS WELL AS BROAD HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT, SHOULD NOT LEAD TO THE STEADY GDR RESOLUTION OF THESE US HUMANITARIAN APPLICATIONS. I SUGGESTED THAT THE GDR SHOULD AGREE TO ESTABLISH WITH THE US EMBASSY A PROCEDURE TO REVIEW SYSTEMATICALLY, AND AT FIXED DATES, THE STATUS OF PENDING AND FUTURE CASES. HE DID NOT RESPOND TO MY SUGGESTION OF AN AGREED PROCEDURE. HONECKER DID STATE THAT HE SAW NO OBJECTION TO OLDER PEOPLE IN THE GDR VISITING THEIR FAMILIES IN THE US AND, IF THEY DESIRED, TO REMAIN WITH THEIR US FAMILIES; IT WOULD BE NO PROBLEM AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE WOULD SEEK A SOLUTION TO THE VISITS OF GDR CITIZENS TO THE US IN CASES OF TRAGEDY, DEATH, SICKNESS AND SO FORTH AND THAT HE WOULD DIRECT HIS EFFORTS TO BOTH OF THE ABOVE ISSUES.

12. JEWISH MATERIAL CLAIMS

I TOLD HIM I WOULD LIKE TO RAISE AGAIN THE QUESTION OF THE US JEWISH COMMUNITY'S DESIRE TO DISCUSS AND SETTLE THEIR PROBLEMS VIS-A-VIS THE GDR. I THOUGHT THIS SHOULD BE DONE, RECALLING THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND OTHER LEADERS OF THE GDR HAD THEMSELVES BEEN THE VICTIMS OF HITLER AND OF FASCISM AND HAD UNDERGONE SACRIFICES AS HAD THE JEWISH COMMUNITY. I NOTED FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT AS A MEMBER OF THE US ARMY I HAD BEEN IN EAST GERMANY AND HAD OBSERVED THOSE SACRIFICES. HONECKER

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SAID THERE WAS NO PROBLEM TO CONTINUED DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE CONFERENCE ON JEWISH CLAIMS AND THE GDR ANTI-FACIST COMMITTEE. THERE WAS NO ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE GDR. IT HAD BEEN HIS VIEW THAT THE ISSUE WHICH CONCERNED THE CONFERENCE ON JEWISH CLAIMS COULD BE SYMBOLICALLY RECOGNIZED AS THEY HAD BEEN THE VICTIMS OF FASCISM. THE PROBLEM COULD BE SETTLED IF A PAYMENT COULD BE MADE IN EAST MARKS, BUT PAYMENT IN DOLLARS WAS DIFFICULT. HE TOLD ME HE WAS PREPARED TO RECOMMEND, IF AN AGREEMENT COULD BE SECURED, THAT A LUMP SUM PAYMENT OF \$1 MILLION BE MADE AS A SYMBOLIC RECOGNITION OF THIS PROBLEM.

13. I SAID I HAD NOTED HIS DESIRE THAT CULTURAL EXCHANGES SHOULD BECOME RECIPROCAL AND TOLD HIM THAT SUCH A POLICY WOULD BE HELPFUL IN OUR RELATIONS.

14. HONECKER CONCLUDED THE MEETING BY SAYING THAT HE HOPED FOR CONTINUITY IN BOTH GDR/US POLICY, SPECIFICALLY A POLICY TO ESTABLISH BETTER RELATIONS AND PURSUE DETENTE. AS TO DETENTE HE SAID THAT HE AND BREZHNEV UNDERSTOOD THE POLICY OF PRESIDENT FORD AND, WITHOUT DENIGRATING MR. CARTER IN ANY WAY, HOPED SUCH A POLICY WOULD PREVAIL, WHATEVER THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES. I EXPRESSED MY PERSONAL VIEW THAT A POLICY OF MUTUAL DETENTE AND CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF NUCLEAR ARMS WOULD CONTINUE AS US POLICY.

15. HE ASKED ME TO CONVEY HIS GOOD WISHES TO THE PRESIDENT. HE THANKED ME FOR THE EFFORTS THAT HAD BEEN MADE BY EMBASSY OFFICIALS AND ME TO DISCUSS FRANKLY ISSUES WITH HIM AND WITH OTHER OFFICIALS OF THE GDR.

16. I THANKED HIM FOR HIS COURTESY IN SEEING ME ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS AND FOR HIS FRANK TALK. COOPER

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